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President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 59 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Donigi (Papua New Guinea): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following Pacific Islands Forum countries represented here at the United Nations: Australia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Papua New Guinea.

The fact that this is one of the most important items on the agenda of the General Assembly is well attested to by the very large number of speakers in the debate. The high degree of participation is also in keeping with the decision of our leaders at the Millennium Summit to intensify efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

As we all know, progress on reforming the Security Council has been slow. It is a very complex issue. We believe, however, that the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, especially with respect to the working methods of the Council, have made a positive contribution. We now, for example, have much improved access to briefings and debates in the Security Council, especially since the adoption of the note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/1999/1291 of 30 December last year. With that alone, the Working Group has proved its worth.

The key features of the Open-ended Working Group are its transparency and its open-endedness. That is so because, whatever the eventual outcome in terms of a reform package, it must have the widest possible support among the membership. Resolution 48/26, which was adopted by consensus, speaks of the importance of reaching general agreement. Consensus on an issue as complex as this will probably not be possible, but it is in the interest of all Member States to contribute constructively and flexibly to the work of the Open-ended Working Group as it strives to build general agreement on a comprehensive package of reforms.

Where indeed do we go from here? Even our own Pacific Islands Forum group does not have a common view on some major aspects of reform, such as enlargement. We all certainly believe that the Council needs to be enlarged to make it more representative. But the devil lies in the details. We believe, however, that the group of 10 countries — Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal and Slovenia — got it right almost three years ago in a paper they submitted to the Working Group. Among other things, they said that

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> "General agreement on a comprehensive reform package is unlikely to be achieved without an understanding on the future scope and application of the veto". (*A/52/47, annex XVI, para. 1*)

We recall that at the Millennium Summit the Chairperson of the third round table was greeted with particular acclamation when he reported on the strong view in his round table that there was a need to curtail the veto. In the Open-ended Working Group, few dispute that general agreement has been reached on that important part of any comprehensive reform package. We suggest therefore, that in order to move things forward this point needs to be further distilled as a matter of priority.

On a separate but related matter, I should note that at the meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum held at Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati, from 27 to 30 October 2000, Forum leaders agreed to explore the creation of a separate regional group of Pacific States within the United Nations. We are conscious that the present regional group system, which has long outlived its usefulness, was a creature of Security Council reform in the 1960s. Perhaps reconfiguration of the regional groups, possibly making them smaller with a more effective policy coordination role, would be another signpost to the future and a means of cutting the Gordian knot we currently face.

I wish now to address the Assembly as the representative of Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea supports the following views. First, we support the view that there must be an enlargement of both the permanent and the non-permanent membership of the Security Council.

Secondly, we believe that small States should be considered as equal partners in the development of initiatives to secure international peace and security for all humankind, regardless of wealth, size and sophistication of military, on-ground involvement in peacekeeping, or financial contribution to the work of the United Nations. In this regard, we believe that small States can contribute objectively on international peace and security issues without being hung up about subjective elements. Thus, small States should not end up being marginalized in any Security Council reform.

Thirdly, Papua New Guinea believes that we can make substantive progress by developing a procedure for reaching agreement on the nature of each issue, on an issue-by-issue basis, bearing in mind that delegations have the right to hold reservations regarding the question of the veto. We urge members to consider this as a more constructive approach than the holistic one. This view is even consistent with the efforts of some delegations to promote results-based budgeting for the United Nations. In that regard, Papua New Guinea joined the other Pacific Islands Forum members in making a regional statement supporting results-based budgeting in the Fifth Committee last month. It would seem to us that a results-based budgeting approach cannot be promoted if we continue to seek wider agreement on all fronts during the debate on Security Council reform. It can be achieved, in our view, only if we set certain benchmarks for ourselves. I put it to the Assembly that those benchmarks must be established on the basis of a step-by-step approach rather than a holistic approach.

In respect to the Forum leaders' agreement to explore a separate regional grouping, Papua New Guinea believes that the current Charter of the United Nations reflects the bipolar politics that existed in the 1950s.

If indeed the future of the world will be based on the absence of a bipolar power syndrome, then the whole regional grouping within the United Nations system must of necessity be reviewed as well. It is in that respect that the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea, when addressing this Assembly in September 1999, stated that there is a need to reconfigure the geographical landscape of the United Nations.

In such a reconfiguration, Papua New Guinea would anticipate that each subregion will be represented on the Security Council. What should therefore be considered is some discussion on the composition of the subregions. This would form the basis of an objective discussion of the size of the expansion of the Security Council. The implications for world peace and security would therefore be a primary function of the countries of the subregion in the first instance. It would also mean that the Security Council would become engaged when all avenues for reaching a peaceful outcome at the subregional level have been exhausted. We believe that this is the only way that small States can conceivably play an important role in international peace and security issues.

Mr. Jayanama (Thailand): At the outset, Mr. President, let me join others who have spoken before me in expressing our appreciation for the work

done by your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, as Chairman, and by Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and John de Saram of Sri Lanka, as co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that, under your keen interest and active leadership, we will make progress.

During the United Nations Millennium Summit, our leaders reiterated the urgent need to reform the Security Council. It is therefore clear that, as we enter the new century, the Security Council, as the primary body entrusted with the indispensable responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, must enhance its legitimacy, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency to deal with the increased and complex new challenges. To achieve this new status, a comprehensive reform package needs to be addressed and agreed upon. The package basically involves three well-known elements: the Council's size and composition; its decision-making process; and its working methods. My delegation would like to discuss these three elements one by one and then raise some points which may assist us in moving ahead.

First of all, on the question of the size and composition of the Security Council, which is known as cluster I, the crux of the issue is: Should expansion take place in both permanent and non-permanent categories, and if so how many new seats should there be and from where? There is already general agreement that the Council should be expanded. The Secretary-General himself drew attention to this when he mentioned in his millennium report that:

> "Based on the distribution of power and alignments in 1945, the composition of the Council today does not fully represent either the character or the needs of our globalized world." (*A/54/2000, para. 44*)

Thailand fully associates itself with that remark and believes that expansion should involve both permanent and non-permanent categories, with the proviso that new permanent members should include developing countries. While attaching importance to the principle of equitable geographical representation, we are also of the view that new permanent members should have the ability and desire to share and make substantive contributions, financially and politically, to the United Nations. By this criteria, we see that Japan is a worthy candidate to be a new permanent member. Nevertheless, before we move ahead on this issue, we need to ask the following question: Do current proposals offer equitable and practical solutions on the new composition?

Secondly, on the decision-making process of the Council, to the overwhelming membership of the United Nations the heart of the problem is in what form the veto should be modified and whether new permanent members should be accorded veto power. With the sole exception of the permanent five, Member States find the veto and its present practice outdated and unacceptable, as it runs counter to the democratic character of the United Nations. On this issue, we should ask why the permanent five need to retain their veto power in the present form.

Thirdly, on the question of the working methods of the Security Council, also known as cluster II, there has been good progress, unlike on the other two elements. We, for one, certainly welcome the fact that some of the proposals have already been taken up by the Council. Cluster II issues have moved ahead because they pose less of a threat to the permanent five's power structure and do not involve amending the Charter. Nevertheless, because the working methods are more transparent and open, they are very important to all non-members of the Security Council, which represent more that 90 per cent of the membership of the United Nations.

This is already the eighth year of our deliberations. Even now, it is regrettable to note that the Working Group at its last session was unable to agree on any substantive recommendation for the General Assembly to consider. The question that many people are asking is: How long shall this exercise go on without progress? This question was asked when I was a Vice-Chairman of the Working Group two years ago and is still being asked today.

Certainly, the current stalemate is not due to a lack of ideas and proposals, for since our work began we have seen many innovative proposals. But now that the options are already on the table, we should try to seek answers to the questions that I posed earlier. Otherwise, we will continue to go over the same ground as in previous years without moving any closer to our reform's objectives.

The way to move forward on the issue of the size and composition of the Security Council is to find a formula that ensures greater equity in the expansion of the Security Council. We need to have a more equitable sharing of the cake. We need to reach a general agreement on a formula for dividing the cake more equally among all players, including a group of important large and medium-sized countries that feel they will not be getting enough of the new cake relative to their substantive contribution to the United Nations. For this equity to come about, a reorientation of thinking regarding the formula of dividing the new cake is necessary.

As to the issue of the veto, it is a question of recognizing and modernizing one's moral and political responsibility. Responsibility here means that those who have the veto should demonstrate their willingness to limit their use of it. Indeed, this responsibility is implicit in the Charter when it speaks of the Security Council as an organ which acts on behalf of all of us. In fact, most of us are realistic enough to accept that the abolition of the veto may not be feasible at this stage, but many of us entertain the hope that the permanent five would at least pledge publicly to use the veto only in regard to actions under Chapter VII of the Charter. This could be a major breakthrough in moving the overall process forward. This magnanimous decision will not only collectively enhance the permanent five's moral and political standing, but also lay down the basis for denying the veto to new permanent members should we agree to have them.

The last and maybe most important factor is leadership — more specifically leadership of the permanent five. Given their privileged position, it is incumbent upon them to exercise the leadership that is expected of them if they really wish the Security Council reform to move forward. In the final analysis, everybody knows that in the Security Council unanimity of the permanent five can move the world. Agreement within the permanent five would pave the way for all other players to play their part in a more realistic way in reaching a truly comprehensive and balanced compromised package.

All the above elements are indeed necessary for a possible comprehensive package, but perhaps not sufficient. In the last seven years decision making in our Working Group has been based on consensus. We need to ensure that its deliberations are not hindered by its working methods. Many delegations, including the Bureau of the Working Group at its last session, have already suggested that our working methods need to be reviewed. Given that the Working Group is the focus of efforts to achieve a comprehensive package on Security Council reform, improving the working methods of the Working Group itself may well turn out, with the necessary political will, to be the decisive issue in facilitating progress.

Finally, the fifty-third session of the General Assembly already passed resolution 53/30 by consensus, thus translating the "general agreement" mentioned in General Assembly resolution 48/26, into numbers — in other words, any resolution or decision on Security Council reform needs at least a two-thirds majority of the Member States. Since by that decision, two-thirds majority voting is foreseen by the General Assembly on this important issue, should we not then proceed on this basis in the Working Group as well?

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The process that we have undertaken to reform the Security Council has been characterized by the somewhat paradoxical fact that although there is a unity of purpose that we all share virtually unanimously, we have nevertheless been incapable after such lengthy and difficult negotiations of reaching an agreement on how to achieve our objectives.

Certainly we have acquired in-depth knowledge about the problem, and we have made some progress, such as the elaboration of rules on the practices and working methods of the Council and the adoption during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly of resolution 53/30, establishing the necessary majorities for decision-making on this matter. Nevertheless, we believe that on the fundamental questions, we are still far from reaching agreement — this despite the generous and intelligent efforts of the President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab and Ambassadors John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, to whom we would like to express our deepest gratitude.

This failure should not, however, discourage us. The unity of purpose remains. We all want to reform the Security Council to adapt it to today's realities and needs. These circumstances, in our opinion, justify the pursuit of our efforts to achieve our objectives and to continue, within the framework of the Working Group,

the search for a formula for reform that can rely on the widespread support of the international community.

On the other hand, however, we have had seven years of continuous debate and negotiations, which without a doubt have been intellectually enriching but sterile when it comes to producing results. These seven years, in the view of Uruguay, illustrate eloquently the fact that if we wish to achieve progress, we must broaden our basis of negotiation and begin to consider other alternatives.

We believe that some of the proposals that have been discussed over the last seven years have already exhausted their potential to serve as a basis for agreement and that it would be pointless to insist on these proposals. I am referring in particular to the proposals to increase the number of permanent members, that is the privileged members having permanent seats and veto rights. Regardless of the intrinsic value that these proposals may have as institutional solutions, experience is teaching us that it will not be possible to obtain on these proposals the general agreement that must underpin the reforms. We must acknowledge quite simply that these proposals serve no further purpose and that the time has come to set them aside and to attempt to continue the debate on a new basis.

We agree with those who have said prior to us that the time has come to put to the test our creativity and imagination and to begin to explore new avenues. We are convinced that it is possible to devise new institutional formulas that can satisfy the interests of all, including the interests of those who wish to participate more extensively in the functioning of the Council.

Any formula that is put to us for consideration will nevertheless, have to respect certain basic principles. I would like to refer to some of these principles:

The first one is the principle of sovereign equality of States. One of the most important manifestations of this principle, enshrined in Article 2, paragraph one of the United Nations Charter, is equal representation and equal rights in and before international organizations. The only acceptable formulas for reform will be those that avoid generating new inequalities amongst the members of the Organization.

The existence of institutional inequalities in an intergovernmental organization is a divisive factor that hinder the smooth functioning of the institution. It also undermines the cohesion of the organization. I believe that it is worthwhile recalling the example of the Organization of American States, a regional organization amongst those referred to in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We should recall that in the Organization of American States, which takes up problems of peace and security in its region, there are no institutional differences, and all of its members – from the most powerful State in the world to the smallest island States of the Caribbean – have the same rights and the same obligations. There is no doubt that this has fostered integration in the region and the practice of effective continental solidarity.

Moreover, respect for the principle of sovereign equality of States naturally excludes any position that would lead to the broadening or consolidation of the use of the veto. The veto right in the Security Council was negotiated and incorporated into the United Nations system as an instrument of power. Fifty-five years of experience confirms this perception because during this period the veto has never been used to defend collective interests but rather to satisfy the national interests of the permanent members. Consequently, we must pursue our aim of eliminating or at least regulating its use.

The second principle to which Uruguay attaches great importance is the representative nature taken on by those members of the United Nations when they become members of the Security Council. According to Article 24 of the Charter of San Francisco, the Security Council, in carrying out its functions, acts on behalf of all members of the Organization, who conferred upon this organ the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council must increasingly become less a forum in which its members present the positions of their respective Governments. Instead, its members should increasingly act as the executive body that carries out the will of the entire international community, the collective will of all Members of the Organization.

Thirdly, reforms should not adversely affect the efficiency of the Council. The Security Council is not a deliberative body; it is essentially an executive body. It should adopt decisions quickly when circumstances warrant. There can be no doubt that there is a logical and practically singular response to the need to make

the Council more representative, to increase the number of its members. However, that increase must be carefully determined in order that the Council can be convened quickly, that its discussions can take place quickly, and that its decisions can be adopted and carried out quickly.

To sum up, we understand that we must begin a new stage in this process of reform. That phase should be a continuation of our previous negotiations, but this time without redundancies and unproductive positions. In embarking upon that new phase, we believe that there are reasons to be moderately optimistic. We share a common objective. In the course of the last seven years we have acquired in-depth knowledge of the problem and its implications. Above all, we now have a clear vision of the limits within which we must operate; that is to say, we have a clear view of the things to which we must not aspire. I trust we have all learned the lessons of those seven years, and that we are all aware that in this new phase we must adopt a more realistic and flexible attitude if we truly want to achieve our common purpose.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): I stand to speak on behalf of the States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and to make clear that our position has not changed from the statement delivered by Ambassador Samuel R. Insanally of Guyana on 24 June 1999.

By and large, CARICOM supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement with regard to a balance that will include both developed and developing countries. CARICOM remains open to negotiations in an effort to find an eventual solution, while emphasizing that the underlying motivation should be based on the principle of equitable representation. The principle of equity is one which, for many reasons, CARICOM wishes to stress.

With regard to the contentious issue of the veto, CARICOM has insisted that it is linked directly to the matter of increasing the number of permanent members. In the belief that there should be no discrimination whatsoever between permanent members, we have posited that this privilege should be extended to any new entrants in this category. Of course, our fundamental view is that the veto is now anachronistic and anti-democratic, and should therefore be abolished. Given, however, the political reality, we are prepared to consider, for the time being, a restriction on the use of the veto to issues falling under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

With regard to having periodic reviews pertaining to both the composition and functions of the Security Council, we consider this idea to have great merit, and some of our States have proposed that this should happen every 15 years.

In concluding, CARICOM wishes to make it abundantly clear that while engaging in this exercise for a more democratic and effective Council, we must likewise explore to its fullest extent the role of the General Assembly under the United Nations Charter in strengthening international peace and security.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): The historic Millennium Summit played a significant role in raising the awareness of the international community about the future role of the United Nations in bringing about a better tomorrow for all mankind. The eminent gathering of heads of State or Government made a great contribution to the promotion of peace, security, social development and human rights. The world leaders unanimously adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which is aimed at reforming the United Nations and its capability to respond effectively to the challenges of the new century and to provide the framework for joint efforts to maintain international peace and security. That document notes, inter alia, the necessity to intensify the efforts of the international community to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

In this respect, my delegation believes strongly that the debate on this issue has been going on for too long. For nearly seven years, we have not been able to take a responsible collective decision. The expression "lost time is never found" is most appropriate in our circumstances. As the whole Assembly is well aware, the Open-ended Working Group established to consider all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council began its deliberations in January 1994. At that time we were all confident that it would be a very productive process that could make a significant contribution towards achieving the main objectives. To our regret and great disappointment, the Working Group has failed to elaborate a unanimous approach on a package of reforms, including the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

Time requires all of us to act in unity to assume the responsibility for the future of the United Nations and for the future of the Council in particular, as that body is mandated under the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. My delegation believes that we have to intensify the negotiation process in the framework of the Working Group in order to fulfil our commitment to make the Security Council a relevant and effective factor in the present-day world.

Kazakhstan has not changed its position with regard to the question of Security Council reform, which has been voiced at the highest level more than once during the last seven years. The Council should be more representative. Its work should be more accountable and more transparent. We stand for the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of its membership, on the basis of equitable geographical representation and respect for the sovereign equality of all United Nations Member States. Kazakhstan also supports the inclusion of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the Council, taking into consideration the substantial contributions of those States to the United Nations budget and the significant roles they play in the multifaceted activities of the United Nations.

We also support permanent membership of the Council for major developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and an increase in the number of non-permanent members. On the issue of the veto, the use of the veto, like that of any other powerful instrument, should be restricted. Its application to decisions under the provisions of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter should be linked to the principle of accountability.

Peacekeeping operations are a vital tool for the Security Council in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The effectiveness of peacekeeping has been a focus of the Security Council in recent years. Recently the Security Council adopted a resolution on peacekeeping operations which clearly indicated the necessity of strengthening the activities of the Security Council in that field; that in turn implies a pressing need to reform the Council as soon as possible.

The twentieth century was marked by two world wars, the cold war and the arms race. The international community continues to experience great suffering caused by conflicts, violence and discrimination. Since the beginning of our discussion of Security Council reform, the world social and economic situation has worsened. That sends a clear message that there is an urgent need for the United Nations and its Member States to make a continuous effort to strengthen the role of the Security Council in the twenty-first century, seizing the opportunity offered by the political momentum seen at the Millennium Summit.

Mr. Bakoniarivo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): My delegation joins previous speakers in conveying its appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council for the commitment they have demonstrated over the past year.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council because of the Council's great importance for the maintenance of international peace and security. Although we should welcome progress with respect to the Council's working methods — such as the increased number of public meetings, post-meeting briefings and summaries provided by outgoing Presidents — the persistence of seemingly unresolvable differences on substantive matters such as the size and composition of the Council and the right of veto justifies the concern and frustration that have been expressed by the majority of delegations, and which my delegation shares.

The restructuring of the Security Council is an inevitable part of any reform exercise the Organization may undertake. Enhancement of the Council's credibility through far-reaching reform should be based on the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation. Like a majority of other Member States, Madagascar believes that maintaining the status quo can only harm the functioning of the Council and could cause a crisis of confidence in the ability of the United Nations to safeguard the collective security system established by the Charter.

In view of the changes that have taken place since the establishment of the United Nations, my delegation unreservedly supports the expansion of the permanent

and the non-permanent membership of the Security Council in order better to reflect the new configuration of international relations.

In that context, Africa — which represents not only the majority of Member States but also the majority of the issues debated in the Council — should be better represented in both categories of Council membership. The anomalous situation in which Africa is not among the permanent members of the Security Council must be put right in the interest of equity, justice and the Organization's credibility. In the new millennium, Africa should not merely be the object of Security Council resolutions; it should be a responsible participant in the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm that peace is the business of us all — large and small, rich and poor — and that lasting peace can be attained only by pooling the efforts of all members of the international community.

Moreover, my delegation is convinced that more involvement and greater responsibility for African countries in the maintenance of international peace and security, through membership of the Security Council, would promote the spread of a culture of peace throughout the continent.

In the light of those considerations, my delegation endorsed the June 1997 Harare Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on reform of the Security Council. That Declaration calls for democratization and equitable geographical distribution in an enlarged Security Council, and expansion of the Council to a total of 26 members in both categories of membership, of which Africa would be allocated at least two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats. We also remain committed to the position of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement as stated at their 1998 Durban summit.

The right of veto is among the most complex and controversial questions in the exercise of restructuring the Security Council. Many oppose retaining a tool which is viewed as anachronistic, undemocratic and contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States, on which the Organization is based. As the United Nations is guarantor and trustee of universal values, its organs, especially the Security Council, must provide a reliable benchmark for democratic principles. My delegation is by no means unaware of the political considerations inherent in the right of veto, but we believe that it is essential and urgent to rethink the way it is used, in the light of its negative impact on the Council's ability to play its Charter role. The use of the veto should be limited to action under Chapter VII of the Charter, pending its complete abolition. In the view of my delegation, the proposal by which a State would be obliged to explain to the General Assembly why it had vetoed a draft resolution deserves careful consideration by the Working Group.

The delegation of Madagascar is aware that Security Council reform is a lengthy and difficult exercise. But we hope that we will be able at this session of the General Assembly to make decisive progress on pending issues thanks to our determination to address this sensitive matter with constructive, realistic ideas and with fresh political will in keeping with the spirit of the new millennium.

Mr. Erdös (Hungary): My delegation welcomes the discussion on this agenda item in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The issue of the reform of the Security Council remains one of the key questions of United Nations reform and continues to be at the centre of the attention of the Member States. The Millennium Summit and the general debate at the present session of the General Assembly, during which an overwhelming majority of Members spoke about the importance of this question and underlined the necessity of making progress in it, bear witness to this most eloquently.

The Foreign Minister of Hungary also stated that recent world events have made the hope of seeing the United Nations adapt itself to the realities of our times into an imperative that can no longer give way to evasive action or hesitation. The Minister added that that includes, inter alia, the reform of the Security Council, which is necessary to reinforce the credibility and effectiveness of our world Organization.

Hungary's position on the issues related to the reform of the Security Council has been laid out in the form of both national statements and joint declarations delivered by the Group of 10, of which Hungary is part. A Security Council capable of carrying out its responsibilities effectively is of the utmost importance to the international community. It has been said and repeated over and over, and it remains true that, in order to achieve this aim, we need a Council that reflects the new political and economic realities of the world — one that operates in a more democratic and

transparent manner and hence enjoys wider support among the Member States and greater legitimacy in the eyes of the world's peoples. It is all the more indispensable to act with this objective in mind in view of the state of our planet today, which only increases the responsibilities of the Security Council in discharging its obligations under the Charter.

Hungary supports the enlargement of the Security Council in both categories of membership. It is our strong belief that an increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council — by way of adding to it industrialized countries and countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean — would better reflect the changed international political and economic landscape and reinforce the credibility of that important decision-making body. The ever-growing membership of the United Nations equally justifies the efforts to increase the number of non-permanent members. This clearly has to be matched with the need to maintain and strengthen the efficiency of the Council's operation. We are fully aware of the complexities inherent in the enlargement effort, which is one more reason why we should all be open and receptive to any proposal likely to help us move forward, including periodic renewals of arrangements decided.

If we look back over the past decade, we have to recognize that we set out in a direction never tried before and managed to achieve some notable changes in the way the Security Council presently operates. But the improvement of the decision-making process remains a task requiring further attention and an innovative approach from the international community. The right of veto and, in particular, its exercise without limitations continue to be challenged by a large proportion of the United Nations membership. Taking into account the highly sensitive character of this issue, we have to continue exploring all avenues in order to find pragmatic ways and means of bringing us all closer to new possibilities in this regard. We should not surrender to frustration, which is understandably widespread amongst us in the respect.

We regret that — in spite of some progress — the Working Group entrusted with the question of the reform of the Security Council has been unable to reach agreement on major issues before it. Since we believe that United Nations reform cannot be complete without the reform of the Security Council, it is our intention to join other delegations in pushing for further efforts which could, through practical and realistic steps, enable us to find solutions to these outstanding issues.

Hungary was pleased that the Millennium Declaration called for the intensification of efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. We believe that it is our common responsibility to use the momentum of an emerging broad support for Security Council reform to meet the challenges ahead and to avoid complacency and a business-as-usual mentality in pursuing our activities in the Working Group. We should be aware that the alternative to these activities would merely preserve the status quo and freeze a situation that has so long been obsolete.

My delegation views your personal involvement, Mr. President, in this endeavour as a right response to the request of Member States to inject more dynamism into and to seek new ways and means to advance our much-needed work in that Working Group. In this undertaking, you can count on my delegation's full support.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I would like to begin, Sir, with a word of congratulation and admiration for the work done by your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, and by Ambassadors John de Saram and Hans Dahlgren, the two co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group. The progress made in the Working Group is to a very large extent the result of their tireless efforts, their diplomatic skill and their patience.

Among numerous goals and tasks that our leaders committed themselves to in the Millennium Declaration is the need to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. This commitment was restated in the majority of the statements made in the general debate of the fifty-fifth session last September. There obviously continues to exist a sense of the urgent need to adjust the Security Council to the realities of the world and of the United Nations. In addition, the launch of the process of reform back in 1993 was also the expression of the disappointment and dissatisfaction of the membership with the Security Council. This remains a major driving force for the reform. The questions of the authority, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council have been constantly raised and their relevance is very much alive among the Council's members themselves.

From all these needs practical proposals have arisen for expansion in the membership of the Security Council to represent more adequately the growing number of United Nations Members. Furthermore, specific proposals on the enlargement of the Council in permanent and non-permanent membership have been made to give a particular role to those Members of the United Nations able and willing to make a particular contribution to the work of the Security Council. A large portion of the membership, including Slovenia, supports the enlargement in both categories. On the other hand, a number of Member States are not yet ready to take that final position on the questions of the size and composition of the Council. The discussions, exchanges of views and arguments should therefore probably continue and intensify. We encourage you, Mr. President, to take an active role in these discussions and negotiations and to use all ways, means and methods at your disposal.

In this context, I cannot fail to mention that, before final arrangements on the enlargement are made for non-permanent members, careful calculation will be necessary in order to ensure the adequate and equitable geographic representation of all regional groups, including in particular the Eastern European Group, whose membership has doubled in the past few years.

Reform of the Security Council involves, of course, not only enlargement. For the majority of Member States the question of working methods, transparency and decision-making, including the veto, are of at least as much importance. We note with satisfaction several improvements in the working methods of the Council. They have been promoted to a large extent by the discussions in the Working Group and are the Council's answer to the criticism expressed, which again proves the relevance of the continuing discussions in the Working Group.

The Council, as a general rule, does not hold most of its meetings behind closed doors any more. The number of open meetings is growing, even though the practice of holding open debates might need some fine-tuning, since some of the discussions have begun to resemble discussions in the General Assembly. Meetings with troop-contributing countries have recently witnessed some positive changes that provide those countries more adequate participation in the work of the Council. We also welcome greater use of missions of the Security Council to troubled areas and believe that such missions should be used as a tool of preventive diplomacy. We would also like to encourage further innovations in the work of the Security Council, which enhance cooperation between the Council and members of the United Nations.

The transparency of the work of the Council and its President has also increased significantly, even though it varies due to different capabilities and approaches of the presidencies. We would encourage, as much as possible, a unified policy of transparency for the benefit of the general membership. In this context some thought could be given to the possibility of greater use of the Secretariat to assist in the "transparent" tasks of the Presidents. For that purpose the already constrained and overburdened Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs should be significantly strengthened.

One of the very important aspects of the reform relates to the question of veto, and in past discussions several proposals were made in this respect. Further discussion and genuine dialogue need to be pursued and intensified. We hope that they will result in finding a way of limiting the scope and use of veto so as to satisfy the larger membership of the Organization, as well as those who shall continue to have the right to use it.

The reform of the Security Council is a process and not an event. Discussions among the membership, and especially within the Working Group in the past seven years, have led to many changes and improvements, especially with regard to the working methods of the Council and the transparency of its work. Of course, the main goal of the reform — to make the Council more representative, more legitimate and more efficient — still remains to be achieved. The issue of the reform of the Security Council and the amendment of the Charter is one of the most sensitive issues for the Organization. It is therefore wise not to rush into quick solutions, but to intensify discussions and negotiations.

We consider that the conference room papers submitted last year by the Bureau of the Working Group can serve as a starting point for future discussions on the reform.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, and Ambassadors John de Saram and Hans Dahlgren for their excellent work and leadership of the

Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council over the last year.

The reform of the Security Council is unquestionably essential to the future of the United Nations. Its success will determine whether humanity will have a mechanism that is effective, democratic, equitable and just to maintain international peace and security. For this reason the heads of State and Government of all Member States of the United Nations agreed, at the Millennium Summit, to intensify their efforts to achieve reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

Costa Rica is firmly committed to an authentic reform and revitalization of the Security Council. We are fully aware of the constraints, obstacles, errors and blunders that affect the action of this organ. Suffice it to recall, for example, the serious difficulties that were encountered both in Sierra Leone and Timor by the various peacekeeping operations. Authentic reform of the Security Council must avoid a repetition of these misfortunes.

The limits that hamper the work of the Security Council are of diverse origin. To a certain extent, the inefficiency of the Security Council can be attributed to the fact that its present structure does not reflect either the current composition of the international community or the contemporary distribution of power amongst nations.

We believe that the composition of the Security Council must reflect the new realities of international politics in a world that is increasingly globalized and interdependent. It is indispensable that the Security Council should express not only the military capacity of the various actors in the international community, but also their economic influence and moral authority. For this reason, Costa Rica advocates an increase in the number of members of the Security Council in order to allow for greater representation of the developing countries in this body. Similarly, my country looks favourably upon the possibility of creating new permanent seats.

However — and I would like to emphasize this point — an increase in the number of members of the Security Council is only a secondary and subsidiary aspect in the process of reforming and revitalizing this body.

Many of the shortcomings in the Security Council are not due to its structure, but rather to flaws in its working machinery, procedures and decision-making process, as well as to the abuse of the veto right. As the Brahimi report (A/55/305) points out, the difficulties that have assailed the United Nations in recent times are due to a great extent to the fact that:

> "The Security Council and the Member States crafted and supported ambiguous, inconsistent and under-funded mandates and then stood back and watched as they failed." (*A/55/305, para. 266*)

Consequently, true reform of the Security Council must aim at making it a more effective, transparent, representative and democratic organ. Authentic revitalization of this body must guarantee that it can in the future adequately fulfil its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

The Security Council, by virtue of its primary function, must be a decision-making centre for all measures aimed at preserving or re-establishing peace. It is, therefore, unacceptable for the Council to renounce its responsibilities and functions. Members of the Security Council are responsible for their decisions vis-à-vis the other members of the international community and must be held accountable.

No member of the Security Council should act exclusively on the basis of its own national interests. It is unacceptable for this organ to become a foreign policy instrument for its members. It is not acceptable for the Security Council to ignore situations that demand its attention, on the pretext that some of its members are involved in these situations or that these members do not have a national interest in the region. True reform of the Security Council requires that this organ become, in the future, much more fair, equitable and impartial. For this reason, we believe that we must place limits on the exercise of veto rights.

Moreover, we must ensure that the Security Council does not take over either the functions of the General Assembly or those of the Economic and Social Council. In conformity with the distribution of responsibilities established in the Charter, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are the competent bodies to implement and coordinate efforts to prevent conflict and build peace. In this context, investments in development, education, health, human rights and democracy are direct investments in future

peace. Consequently, they are as important as the activities of the Security Council.

Small but important advances have been achieved over the last seven years of work on Security Council reform. It is worth noting in particular the significant progress made with regard to the Council's procedures. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the magnitude of the differences of opinion that still exist. Decisions are still pending with regard to the number, categories and powers of new Council members. Agreement must also be reached on the use and limits of the veto. It is also necessary to agree on reforms relating to the Council's working methods in order to ensure its transparency and legitimacy. We must still agree on a mechanism for a periodic review of the Council.

My country believes that it is desirable to reach general agreement on each and every one of those matters. They are all intimately interrelated and are all indispensable for achieving a genuine, comprehensive reform of the Council.

Some delegations have been pessimistic about the reform process during the course of this debate. My country believes that it is still possible to achieve positive results. We believe that if all nations make a real effort and set realistic objectives, it will be possible to bring the reform process to a successful conclusion. Only in that way will we be able to restructure the Council and make it more just, legitimate, transparent and democratic.

Mr. Orellana Mercado (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): There is no doubt that the subject we are considering today is one of the most important that the General Assembly must address. We would therefore like to make some remarks in the broadest possible constructive spirit, as we believe that the United Nations was founded as a response to the need to safeguard humanity and international peace and security after the devastation of the Second World War.

We must keep in mind that our predecessors in this Organization debated the role that each of its Members should play to save future generations from the scourge of war. Likewise, they also gave broad consideration to all aspects of the equation "peace plus security equals economic and social development". Thus, international peace and security are today, as yesterday, a sine qua non for economic and social development, as they cannot exist without each other. How can we think about fundamental human rights or the protection of freedoms and social justice if we do not enjoy peace, security and socio-economic development? In and of themselves, these considerations require us to shoulder seriously and responsibly the issue of reform and enlargement of the Security Council and its decision-making mechanism.

As a founding Member, Honduras has repeatedly stated that, even if no consensus is reached on the expansion of the established categories, the reform process must nevertheless take into account the need to increase the number of non-permanent members and that there should be no attenuation of the right to participate for countries that contribute substantially both to international peace and security and to worldwide socio-economic development. Moreover, reform must be based on consensus in the regional groups in order to guarantee fair and equitable geographical representation.

My delegation believes that the fact that the Working Group established by the Assembly to deal with this issue has not yet completed its consultations illustrates that there are many problems on which consensus is required. Nevertheless, we also believe that it is imperative for the Working Group to make progress in order to satisfy soon the aspirations of the international community to have a strengthened United Nations that is capable of responding in times of crisis to conflicts and disasters, whether caused by nature or man-made.

As President Carlos Roberto Flores Facussé of the Republic of Honduras said during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1999,

> "To summarize, with regard to the new world order, which we hope will prevail in this global forum, Honduras supports broader representation of the peoples and the nations of the world, and a more just and balanced representation in the discussions and decisions of the United Nations." (*A/54/PV.8, p. 4*)

I wish to conclude by expressing our support for the statement made by Egypt in its capacity as coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to add that in the Millennium Declaration heads of State decided to achieve wide-ranging reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. We have no choice but to move in that direction with resolve and determination.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The United Nations and its Charter remain the keystone for world peace, prosperity and justice. The purposes and principles of the United Nations have proved to be universal and timeless. An honest effort to reform the United Nations should be one of the most important goals of its membership in the immediate future.

The strengthening of the United Nations should begin with an effective reform of the Security Council, the primary guardian of international peace and security. In its five and a half decades of existence, the Security Council has received a mixed bag of assessments and reviews on its performance. There is an undeniable consensus that the Council needs to be reformed. Change is inevitable in the Security Council. The Security Council should be made to reflect the changes, both in numbers and in diversity, of the membership of the United Nations over the last 55 years.

For the last seven years, we have invested tremendous efforts in the work of the Open-ended Working Group. The Working Group remains the sole deliberative body on Security Council reform. Unfortunately, however, while we recognize some progress on cluster II issues, discussions of cluster I issues are slow, if not completely stalled. There is a sense that delegations have dug in on their respective positions and have adopted a strategy of waiting one another out. That is one of the challenges facing the Working Group as it resumes its work next year.

All Members of the United Nations should strive to bridge the chasm that divides the Working Group. If compromise is truly not possible, we should be honest with one another, throw in the towel and close down the Working Group. But then we would lose a historic opportunity to reform the Security Council and would be stuck with a status quo that everyone says is anachronistic and unacceptable. My delegation calls upon everyone to work for a compromise. The time to work is now. Reform of the Security Council would serve the interests of the broad membership of the United Nations. Perpetuation of the status quo would only serve the interest of five. The logic for compromise seems to us to be a compelling one.

We also need to examine how the Working Group could achieve more concrete progress in its work. The Working Group should examine its own methods and frameworks to bring about changes and provide impetus for its work. The Philippines would support any effort to improve the Working Group's methodology.

The establishment of the Working Group seven years ago brought a sense of expectation and hope that the United Nations would be able to provide the global community with a responsive and credible Security Council to serve as the champion of world peace. Let us not forget that our constituents extend beyond the four walls of the Assembly Hall. After years of waiting, the international community has become frustrated and has started to doubt that the United Nations, through the Working Group, can deliver on its promise of reform in the Security Council. We hope that the United Nations will not dash the high expectations of the global community and will seek concrete accomplishments in the reform of the Security Council.

I would be remiss if I failed to restate my delegation's hopes and ideals with respect to the goals of the Working Group. The Philippines, along, we believe, with all delegations present here, believes that the Security Council should become truly representative of the aspirations, values and hopes of all countries of the world in order to remain credible in the eyes of all. In our view, that would mean three things: the expansion of its membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories; transparency in its working methods; and democracy in its decision-making process.

At this stage, when the United Nations has 189 members on its roster of sovereign Member States, everyone would agree that the present size and structure of the membership of the Security Council no longer represent the interests of the general United Nations membership — if they ever did in the five and a half decades of the Organization's life. Only five Members of the United Nations have permanent membership of the Council while the other 184 members have to take turns for the 10 non-permanent seats for two years at a time. We should therefore make every effort to find a compromise solution on the issue of the expansion and the size of the Council.

We are gratified that, after seven years of work by the Working Group, the Security Council has taken steps to become more transparent in its working methods. But those steps are still few and far between.

We need the Security Council to respond more decisively to calls for complete transparency in its work. The Working Group has arrived at a set of constructive recommendations aimed at making the Council more transparent. Unfortunately, agreement on those matters is being stalled by a lack of compromise on other issues.

The decision-making process in the Security Council should also be reformed to allow the expression of the sovereign equality of States. The international community, particularly the permanent five, should now deal with the question of the veto, or all the intended reforms of the Council will be rendered meaningless if not totally unattainable. In fact, as some delegations have pointed out, a compromise on the veto would be a watershed for the other questions of reform. We should take a cue from this and perhaps discover a formula for compromise by simultaneously meeting the concerns about the veto and about the need to achieve other meaningful reforms. We believe that pragmatic solutions to the issues are within our grasp if we only make a greater effort and exercise the necessary political will to achieve meaningful solutions to the challenges facing us.

We know that work on Security Council reform is not an event but a process. As shown by our experience, it will be not only tedious but also politically difficult. We urge everyone to remain steadfast in pursuit of the goal of transforming the Security Council into a more responsive instrument for creating a just, fair, peaceful, secure and prosperous world.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia and President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, for the most skilful and patient manner in which he guided our deliberations on issues relating to the reform of the Security Council.

The item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters" encompasses issues that are both complex and of direct relevance to the vital interests of all States Members of the United Nations.

With seven years behind us, this is an appropriate moment to remind ourselves once again of the reason we agreed to embark on an exercise to reform the Security Council. The United Nations was created in the aftermath of the Second World War to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Under the Charter, the Security Council was given primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council was so structured as to give rise to a new global oligarchy comprising five permanent members. The rest of the membership was given voice in the form of six non-permanent members on the basis of two-year terms. Since then, the only change that has taken place was enlargement of the Council by four non-permanent members back in the mid-1960s.

The closing years of the 1980s witnessed profound global changes resulting in a sharp increase in the membership of the United Nations, which now stands at 189. Those developments catalyzed the demand among the general membership for reform of the Council in order to make it more effective, democratic, representative, transparent and accountable. It is with that objective in mind that we will continue to engage constructively as we undertake collectively to reform the Security Council in all its aspects.

We firmly believe that the current global trends to promote democracy, participation, transparency and accountability around the world must also form the basis for the reform of the Security Council. We must act as we preach unto others.

We have all agreed that the principle of sovereign equality of all States must be the guiding spirit and cardinal principle as we seek to reform the Council. We have also agreed that reform should be comprehensive, encompassing enlargement, decision-making, including the question of the veto, and the Council's working methods. If we briefly pause and take stock of the present status of the eight-year-old discussion on issues relating to Security Council reform, it is clear that there are two main obstacles to reaching a general agreement.

On the question of enlargement, there is no dissenting voice on the need for an increase in the number of non-permanent members. Unfortunately, a decision in this regard is being held hostage by a small minority who seek to promote their narrow national ambitions. As a result, the vast majority of the membership continues to be denied its right to have

greater possibilities to participate in and contribute to the work of the Security Council.

Reference has been made to the Secretary-General's remarks that a small minority is holding back progress on the reform of the Council. Indeed, we agree with this assessment, for it is only the few pretenders to power that have blocked any movement forward unless and until their ambitions are met.

If we look at the candidatures chart for non-permanent seats on the Security Council for the coming years, we can see the immense interest that Member States have in participating in the work of the Council. From the Asian Group, candidatures have been announced for terms up to the year 2014-2015, with two candidatures for 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 terms. In the Western Europe and Others' Group, candidatures have been put forward up to the years 2011-2012. For the Eastern European Group, announcements have been made up to the term 2010-2011. Similarly, from the Group of Latin American and the Caribbean (GRULAC) region, candidatures have been announced for non-permanent seats up to the year 2006-2007. These figures conclusively prove the desire of the general membership to participate in the Security Council. By the addition of new permanent members, this legitimate aspiration of Member States will not be met. In fact, it can be mathematically proven that, with every additional permanent seat, we will correspondingly reduce the possibilities for the vast majority of the United Nations membership that comprises medium and small States to serve as non-permanent members on the Council. While the waiting line for non-permanent seats on the Council continues to grow within each of the regions, the few who self-servingly seek to further their national ambitions continue to frustrate any progress in this direction.

That was the mathematical explanation of the reform exercise. I now turn to its political aspects. The so-called pretenders have employed a variety of arguments to justify their national desire to acquire an exalted status on the Council and to join the present oligarchy, which is an anachronistic remnant of the Second World War. In contrast to the claim of the present permanent five members that they were the victors of the Second World War, we have heard the argument that, because some of the new aspirants have high rates of assessed contributions to the United Nations, they should be given the status of permanent members in the Council. In short, we are being asked to accept the notion of these pretenders and their small group of supporters that permanent membership is available to the highest bidder. Let us not forget that the reform of the Council is not an auction. That occurs elsewhere in Manhattan at Sotheby's or Christie's. If budgetary contributions were to determine the size of the role of United Nations Members, most developing countries, whose capacity to pay determines their budgetary assessment, would be left with no role in the United Nations. Perhaps they would qualify for access only to a few General Assembly committees.

Those aspirants who cannot base their claim on the size of their assessed contributions and yet wish to slide into the permanent category tend to argue their case on the basis of regional representation. Africa has made a collective choice, and we fully respect that. There is no such consensus in other regions. The aspirants from these regions cannot peg their claim for permanent status to regional representation. Their claim by definition is narrow and driven by ambition for power and status only. Here I am referring to the regions other than Africa.

Most interestingly, yesterday we heard a delegation that has presented its claim since the very inception of this debate on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and as a self-appointed spokesman of developing countries, modify its claim to privilege by discarding any pretension to regional representation. This is a clear admission that that country lacks the confidence and trust of the region to which it belongs. This is also an admission that it lacks the assurance of acquiring that trust even in the future.

Related to the issue of equitable regional representation is the point that has been raised a number of times over the years — namely, why should the European Union have two permanent seats in the Council? In fact, a proposal has been made that the European Union should have only one seat. This proposal stands to reason, as the European Union has a single foreign policy and currency and is increasingly moving towards a single defence policy.

We must also take into account that any aspirant to a permanent or a non-permanent seat must be in strict compliance with its obligations under the Charter as well as the resolutions of the United Nations. Compulsive violators of the purposes and principles of the Charter cannot expect to be rewarded by anointment as permanent members.

In past and present debates, we have heard figures bandied around unabashedly in an attempt to create a certain impression of how the general membership may or may not view the question of enlargement of the Security Council. Those doing so have attempted to gloss over the fundamental issues involved.

A clear description of what the aspirants are seeking has been assiduously avoided. Do they aspire to permanent membership with characteristics as presently contained in the Charter, including the veto? Or are we being asked to consider a new concept of second-class permanent membership, without the veto? We also have before us the proposal of regional permanent seats on a rotational basis, with the veto. That proposal has been put forward by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and also by the Arab League. In the years of discussions, we have not been able to clarify these fundamental questions. How, then, can the general membership be asked to support expansion in the permanent category, when we do not know what we are being asked to support?

Secondly, on the analogy of claims for a permanent seat by different regional groupings, one cannot rule out that others, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, may in future make similar claims for permanent membership. The point then arises: where do we stop?

Eight years of debate have clearly established that there is no agreement on any increase in the permanent category. Any agreement on this appears equally unlikely in the near future, and this jugglery of numbers will not work. It is therefore time that we embraced the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, namely, that expansion should take place in the non-permanent category for the time being. In doing so, we shall have met a major demand of the general membership.

The pretenders to permanent membership of the Security Council seem to consider themselves as somehow belonging to a higher caste compared with the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations. This view is self-deluding and contrary to the very basis on which the United Nations was founded as an Organization of sovereign and equal States.

The overwhelming sentiment of Member States is against the privilege of the veto. Here, too, progress has been blocked by a very small minority of States. The veto is the primary obstacle to a truly democratic Security Council. Whatever little justification may have existed for such a mechanism at the end of the Second World War is clearly no longer valid. The veto is not only obsolete; it is also contrary to contemporary trends. In the immediate term, we join the vast majority of Member States in seeking curtailment of the use of the veto to actions under Chapter VII only. In the longer term, we join the majority of Member States in seeking the eventual elimination of the veto, in conformity with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the area of working methods, or Cluster II issues, progress has been made in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. We are pleased to note that the Council itself has taken a number of positive steps in this direction. We also welcome the mechanism that the Council will be establishing pursuant to recommendations of the Brahimi report, which would permit for greater consultation and coordination between Council members and troop-contributing countries. However, more progress is needed to ensure increased accessibility and transparency of the Council.

The reform of the Security Council must be carried out in an open-ended and inclusive manner. The issues involved touch upon the fundamental interests of all Member States. Therefore, any discussions on these issues must be conducted in a framework that is open to all Member States. Of late, an attempt has been made to cast doubt on the efficacy of the Open-ended Working Group. The Open-ended Working Group remains the only appropriate forum to continue this exercise and process in a transparent manner, in keeping with the mandate given to it by the General Assembly.

We look forward to the resumption of our discussions when the Open-ended Working Group is convened next year. On behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I would like to assure you, Mr. President, of our active support and cooperation as you guide our deliberations on an issue that is crucial to all Member States. My delegation remains fully committed to the reform of the Security Council in its all aspects, in keeping with the call contained in the Millennium Declaration.

Needless to say, the comprehensive reform of the Security Council should be undertaken in a manner that

unites and does not divide the general membership. The general good of the general membership, and not the national aspirations or narrow motives of a minority of the membership, must remain the yardstick against which we should judge the reform of the Council.

The issues of size or enlargement and veto are closely interlinked; one cannot be divorced from the other. We must also realize that fortresses of privilege, power and prestige smack of a bygone era. We are not in 1945. There are no victors or vanquished now. There are no spoils for the asking or the taking. The very concept of permanent membership with special power and privilege is totally anachronistic. Any reform of the Council must strengthen the inclusive and participatory character of the Organization in keeping with the principle of the sovereign equality of States and must be aimed at reducing, not accentuating, the anomalies of the past. We must learn from history and not repeat it. There is no justification for the creation of new centres of privilege at the cost of the rest of the membership.

As to where the general sentiment lies on this issue, one has only to recall — and I think you, Mr. President, were also here at that time — the resounding spontaneous applause that the President of Venezuela received in this very Hall during the Millennium Summit when he called for the democratization of the Security Council and the elimination of the veto. That was not an expression of a minority and reality does not change by interpreting numbers to mean what the handful of pretenders choose them to mean for their narrow national interests.

Mr. Ahmad (Malaysia): The entire fraternity of the United Nations has recognized the need to strengthen this universal Organization to better serve the peoples of the world by making it more relevant to the times and more in tune with current realities. It is in this context that the reform of the Organization has become an agenda of crucial importance. One of the most pivotal aspects of this reform process is the modernization of one of the principal organs of the Organization, the Security Council. At the Millennium Summit, our leaders resolved

> "to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*)

Our shared responsibility now is to translate this commitment into a reality.

The General Assembly and its Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform have substantially deliberated the agenda item before us for the past seven years. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation, Sir, to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Foreign Minister of Namibia, as well as to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, for all their hard work during the last session.

When we embark on this reform exercise, we should remind ourselves that we are working towards a comprehensive reform and modernization of the Security Council. The objective is already common to all. We are searching for a generally acceptable formula for a more representative, more legitimate, more democratic, more efficient and effective, as well as a more transparent and accountable Security Council. The attainment of this objective is clearly long overdue. The current session of the General Assembly is therefore crucial to our continued efforts to build upon the progress that has been achieved over these past long years. Many important proposals have been made and thoroughly discussed, from a new composition to a new size for the Council, from the working procedures to the decision-making process, in particular the question of the veto. Clearly, what are lacking are not ideas and proposals, but the necessary political will to propel the reform process forward to its successful conclusion.

Malaysia believes that all Member States should continue the crucial work at this session with added commitment, as has been declared by our leaders. The most important task before us now is to work on the points of convergence and to bridge the remaining differences towards compromise solutions. This task is surely not insurmountable, given the political will and our common desire for a comprehensive modernization of the Council. It is the hope of my delegation that, when the Open-ended Working Group resumes its work under your able leadership, Mr. President, and that of your Vice-Chairmen, we will be in a better position to embark on concrete attempts to consolidate various positions in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to this exercise.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Vice-President, took the Chair.

There is already a clear and unambiguous articulation of the common desire to enlarge the membership of the Security Council to make it commensurate with the dramatic increase in the United Nations membership. The size of the Council membership's expansion must be significant in order to reflect its position as a truly representative organ of this Organization. The expansion must take fully into account the legitimate interest of the developing countries, which constitute the largest majority in this Organization and which, in the context of the present structure of the Council, are unduly disadvantaged and grossly underrepresented.

My delegation continues to support an expansion of the Council in both categories of its membership, permanent and non-permanent. Any expansion in the permanent category should include industrialized and developing countries alike. If there is no agreement on expansion of the permanent membership, the Council should be enlarged for the time being in the non-permanent category.

Without the necessary reform, the Council will remain an anachronistic institution that reflects the outdated realities and power equations of the immediate post-Second-World-War period. The existence of the veto has rendered the Council an organ with undemocratic decision-making. It cannot be denied that much of the impasse and paralysis of the Council has to do with this aspect of the decision-making process. The veto was at the core of the inaction of the Council in the face of the Bosnia massacre, the Great Lakes region genocide, the Kosovo tragedy and the five decades of the Middle East conflict. The clear threat of the veto by one permanent member has so far prevented the Council from taking effective and responsible action to address the ongoing grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

Clearly, the issue of the veto will have to be addressed thoroughly by the membership of the Organization, in particular the permanent members themselves, as one of the important aspects of a comprehensive reform of the Council. We need to identify the acceptable measures to circumscribe, or at least to manage, the use of the veto if the Council is to function effectively and in a responsible manner, as required by the Charter. Malaysia hopes that some creative way of managing the veto, pending its eventual elimination, will be embraced by the permanent members in their enlightened self-interest and in the larger interest of the international community. After all, this is one aspect of the reform that already commands the requisite general agreement.

My delegation welcomes the positive developments in the working methods and procedures of the Council, in particular the increased transparency and accessibility to the wider membership. It goes without saying that improving transparency and accessibility in the work of the Council has significantly enhanced the credibility of that organ vis-à-vis the general membership of the United Nations. We all recognize that this aspect of the Council reform has achieved considerable and substantial progress. So many important proposals that have been discussed in the Open-ended Working Group over these years have finally come to enjoy consensus.

My delegation joins previous speakers in encouraging Mr. Holkeri, as the current Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, to fully utilize the prestige and prerogatives of his office, as well as his considerable diplomatic skills and experience, to re-energize the reform process and to seek further progress in our work on this highly charged question. My delegation also urges members of the Bureau and the wider membership to rejuvenate the sense of great urgency and dynamism that once characterized the discussions of the Working Group. Pragmatism, creativity and, most important of all, flexibility are necessary if real progress is to be achieved. The challenge before us is to determine whether further examination of different aspects of the Council reform can and will expedite the process of putting together the final, acceptable and integrated package of reform that meets the requirement of general agreement.

Mr. Mochochoko (Lesotho): Over the last decade the world has witnessed an unprecedented process of democratization as countries have moved to be more inclusive and representative. To be sure, the United Nations has been at the forefront of all efforts aimed at building democratic institutions. Yet, this Organization that has spearheaded democratic institutions and values is itself perceived to be largely undemocratic. While there is general agreement on the need for systemic change of the Organization, consensus continues to elude us on the scope and contents of such reform.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of the Security Council, the most powerful organ of the United Nations and the organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Seven years after the beginning of the debate on the reform of the Council, and in spite of significant improvements in certain areas of its work, the Council continues to be seen as unrepresentative of the general membership of the United Nations, unaccountable for its activities and far less effective than it could otherwise be. It is thus no surprise that the large majority of the membership of the United Nations, comprised of the very populous but economically disadvantaged developing countries, continue to complain of the Council's double standards, marginalization, lack of transparency, bias and pursuit of regional, political, economic or other interests to the detriment of the larger collective interests. These complaints continue to cast doubts on the sincerity of the permanent members' efforts to reform the Council.

Today's debate once again offers an opportunity for us to take stock of our work in the difficult but necessary task of reforming the Council. This important evaluation should enable us to strategically outline our road map for the future work of the Open-ended Working Group. This should thus be a time for genuine reflection on how we intend to find workable solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Above all, it is time to rededicate ourselves to the spirit of dialogue, which is necessary for reaching the required compromises for building a more effective and representative Council. The democratization of the United Nations and, in particular, of the Security Council continues to be essential, not only for the credibility of international law, but also for the legitimacy of specific actions of the Council.

Our debate this year takes place against the backdrop of some positive developments that should be an inspiration for us to continue working hard on pending issues before the Working Group. These developments include the Secretary-General's report, "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000), as well as the unprecedented Millennium Summit. In his report, the Secretary-General urged us to spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's peoples.

The Secretary-General called upon us to reform the Council in a way that will both enable it to carry out its responsibilities more effectively and give it greater legitimacy in the eyes of all the world's peoples. In the same vein, the leaders of the Group of Eight major Powers, meeting in Okinawa in June 2000, reiterated the need to reform the United Nations and in this regard emphasized the indispensable need for Council reform. The heads of State and Government echoed this sentiment in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) when they resolved to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

We must now capitalize on the momentum created by these positive developments and work towards achieving the long overdue desired comprehensive reform of the Council.

There can be no doubt that today's composition of the Council, which is still based on the distribution of power and alignments in 1945, does not fully represent either the character or the needs of our globalized world. This has led to consensus on the need to improve the representation and legitimacy of the Council by increasing its membership. We continue, however, to hold different views regarding the required expansion. The challenge for us is to find a balance between the imperatives of true representation in the Council, while at the same time ensuring that the Council is not necessarily rendered unwieldy and ineffective. The solution to this complex problem lies in reconciling the inherent tensions between effectiveness and legitimacy in the Council.

In this regard, the majority view, which is also shared by this delegation, continues to be in favour of increasing regional representation in both categories for the under-represented peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The well-known African position on this issue is that Africa should be allocated no fewer than two seats in the permanent category, and we reiterate our support for this position.

There can also be no escape from the fact that the composition of today's Council has to reflect today's global economic realities. The reality is that today Japan and Germany, respectively the second and third largest financial contributors to the United Nations, are also major players in the global economy — hence the

emerging widespread consensus that expansion in the permanent category should include these two countries. The bid by these two countries for permanent seats, which Lesotho supports, can thus not be ignored.

This delegation is amongst those who continue to believe that, like the issues of working methods and periodic reviews, the issue of expansion is capable of resolution. What is required is the necessary political will and genuine commitment to make tangible progress on these issues. The need for a timely and urgent focused discussion of these issues can thus not be overemphasized.

The most taxing question before the Working Group is how to deal with the veto. For the majority of us, the present system, in terms of which the permanent members enjoy certain privileges, including in particular the veto, is unsatisfactory. The cold war era is a grim reminder of how the veto can paralyse the Council and lead to deadlocks in times of crisis. The indiscriminate use of the veto in furtherance of national interests and usually at the expense of the collective have thus necessitated calls for the abolition of the veto.

To this end, options on how to deal with this problem that cuts across the enlargement issue include: granting additional permanent seats but without the veto, elimination of the veto with replacement by a quasi-veto super-majority requirement in some decisions, restricting veto use to Chapter VII issues only, and so forth.

This plurality of options is indicative of the complexity of the problem. While we realize the complex nature of all the issues before the Open-ended Working Group, these difficulties should not adversely affect our determination to reach agreement. Over the years the Working Group has made steady progress on various issues, and we should build on these achievements to make even more progress. The constructive spirit of cooperation in previous discussions augurs well for our continued efforts to find solutions. It is thus our hope that future deliberations in the Working Group will succeed in concretizing our collective endeavours to enhance the legitimacy, authority and effectiveness of the Council and will make this organ more relevant to the contemporary realities of the post-cold war era. My delegation thus looks forward to our continuing dialogue in the Working Group next year.

In conclusion, we thank the President of the fifty-fourth session, Foreign Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, for his stewardship of the process during the last session. Our thanks and gratitude also go to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassadors Dahlgren and de Saram for their guidance, patience and dedication. We assure them of our continued cooperation as they guide the Working Group to a successful conclusion of its work.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish at the outset to convey our appreciation and gratitude to the former Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for its outstanding work over the past year and, in particular, to the Chairman of the Working Group and his two Vice-Chairmen for their leadership and patience during the discussions of the Working Group in the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

We are pleased that President Holkeri will guide our deliberations on this critically important issue in this session. We have full confidence in his diplomatic skill and in his commitment to steer our deliberations to a successful conclusion, which would further strengthen our Organization in general and the Security Council in particular.

Seven years have elapsed since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. The in-depth debates in the course of the last session of the Working Group, which ended last July, and more precisely the profound disagreement on the draft report to the General Assembly, have in fact proved that there remain significant differences on such substantive matters as the size and composition of the Security Council, and especially as regards increasing the permanent membership and the right of veto. In other words, the fundamental question as to how to advance from the Security Council we have now to an organ that is more representative and democratic, but no less efficient, has yet to be answered.

At the same time, during the last session the Working Group managed to make some considerable progress on issues relating to the Council's working methods. In our opinion more progress, especially in the modality of the holding of meetings and consultations with the directly interested and troop-

contributing countries, is required in order to ensure increased accessibility and transparency. We also witnessed some minor softening of some rigid positions on the size of a reformed Security Council. This proved that this mechanism is not yet exhausted and that the Working Group should be given a further opportunity.

Nevertheless, the impasse or lack of progress regarding the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council should be viewed as a direct product of the enormous importance of the issue and the diversity of views and interests, and not be perceived as a result of obstructionism and delay tactics.

Here it is worth reaffirming the fall-back position maintained by the Non-aligned Movement, namely that if agreement is not reached on the expansion of the permanent membership, then the expansion should be limited for the present to the non-permanent seats.

We believe that the interests of all States and regions should be seriously considered in this unprecedented and historic exercise, which is also crucially important for the future of the United Nations and international relations. Therefore, the process of reforming the Council should not be subject to any predetermined and superficial timetable. Any attempt to impose a premature, hasty decision would run the risk of doing harm to this very delicate process, which is so important to all the Member States of our Organization.

We believe that the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council, with the same format and rules of procedure, continues to be the appropriate forum in which to pursue efforts aimed at reform of the Council. Therefore this Group should be given an opportunity to complete the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. We are of the view that — due to importance of reforming the Council while respecting the principle of the equality of all Member States — all efforts should be made to reach the broadest possible agreement among the Member States.

As to the objectives of the reform of the Council, we continue to believe that the objective of the reform process is, and must remain, to make the Council more representative, more democratic, more transparent and more accountable, thereby helping to strengthen its efficiency and to increase its authority and that of the United Nations as a whole. Therefore, the reform must take into account the dramatic changes that have taken place since the creation of the United Nations 55 years ago. These changes include the end of the colonial era, which led to the developing countries gaining influence and to the end of the cold war. We believe that the attainment of these objectives requires, among other things, that the membership of the Council be expanded to at least 26, so that the developing world can be better represented.

Moreover, the opinion of the vast majority of the Member States, who continue to express their dissatisfaction about the use of veto in the decision-making process of the Security Council — on the grounds that it is an undemocratic instrument — should be heeded. The general support for limiting and curtailing the use of the veto with a view to its eventual elimination needs to be explicitly reflected in the final outcome of the Working Group.

As emphasized by the heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration, all Member States should

> "intensify [their] efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*A/RES/55/2, para. 30*)

These aspects include enlargement and decision-making and the related question of the veto, as well as working methods. We believe that any selective approach would be counter-productive and run the risk of dividing rather than uniting Member States.

Mr. Morales (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): All of those who have spoken before me emphasized the fact that we have spent seven years going to and fro in the hope of reforming the Security Council. Listening to our discussions one could get the impression that we all agree that we must undertake a profound transformation of this United Nations organ, but that differences remain on some fundamental points, such as the size and the system of representation of an enlarged Council; the reasons for granting privileges in perpetuity to new members; decision-making and the veto. We must face these issues head on and hold frank discussions, because these seem to be the obstacles that are preventing us from making progress towards definite conclusions.

The Republic of Panama, during the Millennium Summit and throughout this fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, has appealed to Member States to

move with greater speed towards agreements that will ensure that the Security Council is more democratic, more transparent and more congruent with the general interests and aspirations of the international community.

In order to reach such agreements we must agree that the composition of the Security Council must be more equitable and representative and that any increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council must not exacerbate the malfunctions that we have criticized so extensively. It will not be easy to reach agreement on these matters, but the delegation of Panama feels that without agreement the serious problems that have been dragging on will not be resolved.

The delegation of Panama attaches considerable importance to the Open-ended Working Group's most recent report on the item under consideration, and welcomes its recommendation that the General Assembly should decide the modalities by which the Working Group can continue its work. We respectfully recommend that decisions on them be made. To specify those modalities, we must, among other things, adopt positions in keeping with today's realities, accept that the premises on which the Security Council was created, as a reflection of the power structure of 1945, have ceased to exist and recognize that, because they have the privilege of exercising the all-powerful veto, some of its members have avoided their responsibilities and ignored decisions when it has been in their national interest to do so.

In making our proposal, we are echoing Member States and public opinion makers who point to the atavistic veto as an obsession that does not belong in a globalized world, who express their growing concern at the use of this instrument and who agree with the Permanent Representative of Spain when he states that the veto is the mother of all United Nations powers.

When we consider the origins of the veto, we recall that the countries that defeated the Axis in the Second World War and that devised it came from two opposing ideological camps, and that in order to maintain peace, security and ideological bipolarity, none of the five dominant Powers of the time could permit the adoption of resolutions that it regarded as unacceptable. The result was peaceful coexistence among those five dominant Powers for the relevant period. But it no longer makes sense to continue applying this system after the collapse of the bipolar world order and the emergence of a new globalized world.

The legitimacy and effectiveness of the actions taken by the Security Council depends today, and will depend in the future, on whether its composition and actions fully reflect the political, economic and social realities of today's world. The partiality that at times leads even to paralysis, and the threat of the veto after the discussion of issues with serious international repercussions, no longer have a place in a body that must necessarily be consistent with the order of international coexistence to which we have all committed ourselves in the United Nations.

Therefore, the delegation of Panama hopes that we will continue the task of tackling this matter, beginning with those items that have broad support, and, step by step, continue moving towards reaching formal agreements.

Mr. Lara Castro (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, as well as to Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, for the excellent manner in which they conducted the work of the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council this year.

The delegation of Paraguay has participated from the outset in the Group's work.

We believe that it is necessary to express once again what Paraguay has already stated on a number of occasions through statements by Presidents of the Republic and Foreign Ministers: that there is a need to democratize the Security Council.

Paraguay obviously agrees on the need for a system of representation that is different from the current structure, which dates from the post-war Security Council. It also shares the view that reform should offer a meaningful alternative to recover the Security Council's legitimacy and provide a real option to make viable international efforts to bring about a world, now troubled by inequality, conflicts and injustice, of international cooperation, development and peace.

Given that, the delegation of Paraguay will continue to support you, Mr. President, and the Working Group over which you preside in order to make progress in the reform of the Security Council. However, permit me to make some observations in this context.

First, at the Millennium Summit the heads of State and Government affirmed, and stated in the Millennium Declaration, the need to intensify efforts to achieve genuine reform. That is a clear mandate that we must pursue.

Secondly, as a democratic and representative option, reform will not be feasible without the political will to ensure, within the context of world changes, expanded geographical representation and control over those who decide global policy by using their veto power, with its hegemonic influence.

Thirdly, in all these years of intellectual work by the Open-ended Working Group, many important elements have been contributed to Cluster I and Cluster II of the Working Group. The debates on reform and the time given to shared efforts have shown the diversity of views and the complexity of the matter. Nevertheless, the members are aware that reform cannot be left behind in the accelerated pace of change in the international system. Therefore, the joint effort creates an understanding that offers differing priorities and views. But amid the complexity of international political forces perhaps what is important is to understand the challenges and opportunities offered by the current debate.

Reforming the Security Council to make it more democratic, representative and transparent could be considered an ambitious goal. Some countries' resistance to strengthening the process of dialogue and negotiation undoubtedly make compromises and collective efforts difficult. However, the efforts of delegations in the Working Group support the idea of a reform that would ensure a fairer and more equitable world order.

As the Working Group's report states, significant differences and divergent opinions remain on a number of points, including, inter alia, the category or categories of the new members of an enlarged Security Council, the size of an enlarged Council and the veto. In seven years the Open-ended Working Group has not been able to reach compromises on these issues. Nevertheless, my delegation greatly value the efforts that countries participating in the Working Group have made to provide us with enlightening information in this problematic area.

Paraguay's position is as follows. First, as was stated by our Minister for Foreign Affairs to the fifty-fifth General Assembly:

> "We are concerned about the delay in the adoption of a decision about the future composition of the Security Council, because we feel that its enlargement cannot be postponed. Its composition must become more equitable and representative and allow for a better political balance. This gradual process of democratization must begin with an increase in both categories of members, permanent and non-permanent, and it should also include both developed and developing countries. Special attention should be given to the fact that the developing countries are now under-represented in that very important body." (*A/55/PV.17*)

Advancing towards a pluralist and balanced representation will mean thinking fundamentally in terms of the global interests of humanity, before promoting national interests. We believe that the new permanent members must include at least the two industrialized countries that have become major contributors to this Organization and that have participated in the construction of a new world order.

As regards the developing countries, it is of even greater concern that at least two thirds of the 189 Member States are developing countries, and that they are entirely under-represented in the Council. The fundamental objective of the enlargement of the Council must be, therefore, to rectify this unacceptable under-representation of the developing countries.

With regard to the veto, Paraguay considers that the reform should include the gradual elimination of the veto right of the permanent members. And speaking of the veto privilege enjoyed by five members of the Security Council, Paraguay agrees with the thesis that it should be eliminated gradually, for objective reasons. Under the current circumstances with both reasonable and realistic views, we are being forced to accept the veto as an inherent privilege of the great Powers. Consequently, those who do not enjoy this privilege today must, at the very least, endeavour to include in the reform some restraints that will limit the arbitrary exercise of this privilege.

Realism requires us to at least acknowledge the need to limit the privilege of the veto, but we seem to be moving further and further away from eliminating the veto. Perhaps we should orient our work towards seeking a gradual mechanism, with the responsible use of the veto in those cases where it is justified under such a scheme.

Paraguay will continue to make every effort to contribute to the process of reforming the Security Council and strengthening the United Nations.

Mr. Castellón Duarte (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and Ambassador John De Saram of Sri Lanka, for their efforts and devotion during the last session and for the important document that has been issued.

Among the significant decisions adopted by our heads of State and Government in the final Declaration of the Millennium Summit, one decision emphasized that we must

> "intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*A/RES/55/2, para. 30*)

This, however, this is not an easy task. Ever since the Working Group was created, a large number of opinions have been discussed, some on several occasions; nonetheless, even after seven years of debate, we are not yet clear as to which reforms might be able to be adopted. Despite the time that has passed, no decision of substance has been adopted.

The Working Group created by General Assembly resolution 48/26 is the most appropriate forum for continuing discussions of this matter. Nevertheless, delegations need to show flexibility and the political will to make progress, so that we can achieve significant decisions and thus adapt the Security Council to current times, making it more efficient, giving its decisions greater legitimacy and allowing all States to feel that they are truly represented in this major organ of the United Nations.

In line with the positions we have expressed in the Working Group, we would like to state that we are in agreement with the following.

First, Nicaragua is in favour of an enlargement of the Security Council that takes into account the increase in the number of Member States since 1945, when our Organization was created.

Second, Nicaragua agrees that this enlargement must take place in both categories of members — permanent and non-permanent — giving due consideration to geographical distribution.

Third, Nicaragua agrees that the number of non-permanent members should only be increased if it is not possible to increase the number of permanent members.

Fourth, we support an increase of five new permanent members and five new non-permanent members. The latter should include one from each geographical region, while establishing the criterion that there must not be more than 25 member States in the Security Council.

Fifth, we support the candidacy of Japan and Germany for permanent membership of the Security Council, as well as representation in this category for the States of Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa.

Sixth, we believe that the new permanent members must enjoy the same conditions as the current permanent members, including the right to the veto. The substantial difference between the permanent and the non-permanent members is, precisely, the right of veto. Denying veto rights to the new permanent members would mean creating a third category of State, which would create confusion and exacerbate the existing inequality among the Member States of the Organization.

Seventh, we believe it would be appropriate to carry out a study, within the Working Group, on limiting the scope of the application of the veto. Eighth, we also support measures to improve transparency in the work of the Security Council so that the States Members of the Organization will be better informed.

Our delegation hopes that the work of the Working Group will be successful. We therefore commit ourselves to working with the President of the General Assembly in order to attain the objective of Security Council reform.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation regrets that after seven years, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council has not been able to resolve with finality the issue of the reform of the Security Council. It is, however, encouraging to note that the Millennium Summit reaffirmed the need to complete the reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council, on an urgent basis. It is our hope that this rededication on the part of our leaders will add momentum to the search for consensus in this matter.

My delegation believes that both reform and expansion of the Security Council should take into consideration the global changes that have taken place since the inception of the Organization, taking into account the urgent need to reflect the concerns of developing countries. In the case of the Security Council, the objective of the reforms should be to bring about greater democratization by restoring balanced representation between the developed North and the developing South in both categories of membership. We see this as a process for conferring fairness and greater legitimacy on the Council in the eyes of all Member States and the international community as a whole.

Concerning the expansion of the Council, Africa needs special consideration, given that it is the continent with the largest number of Member States in the Organization. The under-representation of Africa in the Security Council cannot, therefore, be justified in the new millennium. Its disproportionate under-representation in the Security Council requires remedying on an urgent basis. The Organization of African Unity, through its summit, has pronounced itself succinctly on this matter.

Regarding the veto, our position is to call for the extension of the same rights and privileges to any new permanent members that join the Council. We consider both the issue of expansion and the issue of the veto as integral parts of a common package. We further suggest that, as a first step, the exercise of the veto in the expanded Council should be restricted only to issues considered critical for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Lack of action to resolve the issue of Security Council reform sends the wrong signal to the international community. The Millennium Assembly, coming on the heels of the Millennium Summit, cannot backpedal on an issue that was clearly stated by our leaders when they met here last September. Any continuing failure to fulfil the aspirations of the majority will only generate disillusionment and undermine the very ideals and institutions we seek to promote. One wonders whether there will be any incentive for the Working Group to proceed with the deliberations.

My delegation therefore wishes to express its hope that the Members of the United Nations will have the ability and strength to rise above narrow political considerations and forge a credible partnership for the reform of the Security Council. If further evidence of the resolve of the international community is needed, let us look at the Declaration of the South Summit, which met in Havana in April 2000, and the resolutions of the Organization of African Unity summit, which met in July 2000 in Lomé, Togo; they provide clear guidance on this matter. The time is right and the circumstances are propitious. I believe we can move forward.

Mr. Sěrkšnys (Lithuania): The Security Council and the General Assembly are the most important United Nations bodies. Over time, even though the importance of the Council has continued to increase, the Council membership as a proportion of the entire United Nations membership has been decreasing. At the time of its founding and in the decades following, the Council consisted of a quarter of the membership. Now, representing less than a twelfth of the United Nations membership, it is the smallest United Nations body.

Seven years ago, the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. Some progress has been made in recent years. The conference room papers that have been prepared on both clusters are of great importance. The Council's work is becoming increasingly transparent. For instance, the reintroduction of private meetings and the increased number of open debates are giving an opportunity to non-members to participate in the deliberations of the Security Council.

So far, however, the institutional reform of the Security Council has been too slow. It is regrettable that there are still more points of disagreement than

items on which agreement has been reached. Nevertheless, we believe that a common solution can be achieved, including with regard to the most difficult stumbling blocks to reform, such as the size of an enlarged Council and the use of the veto.

In this regard, I would like to underline the importance of the consensus agreement reached by the leaders of our countries during the Millennium Summit. They resolved

> "To intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*resolution 55/2, Millennium Declaration, para. 30*)

Moreover, at the Millennium Summit a majority of countries raised their voice in support of the need to reform the Security Council. This sentiment was echoed by more than 150 speakers during the general debate of the Millennium Assembly. That adds strong political momentum to our efforts.

The momentum should not be lost if we are to finish our work. We cannot give up even when differences in the positions of Member States look insurmountable. Time goes by, and positions can be modified to enable a single solution to emerge. The only thing we need is a strong political will to agree.

I would also like to refer to my President, who, speaking about the deadlocked process of reforming the Security Council, emphasized the importance of the right leadership. The active involvement and the leading role of the President of the General Assembly will be essential for furthering the reform of the Security Council.

It is time to move from discussions to negotiations with a view to hammering out decisions within a reasonably short period. The time factor is crucially important. The prevailing feeling is that we have been circling around some issues without ever starting to embark upon bridging the gaps. I am not a proponent of artificial deadlines, but I am equally against indefinite brainstorming.

The fundamental principle of Lithuania's position is a search for compromises, which, we believe, are achievable in respect of all topics, even the most difficult. In short, Lithuania adheres to the following elements:

The Council should be enlarged in both categories while retaining the current ratio of 1:2. For the sake of compromise, support might be found for the expansion of one category — the non-permanent — provided that there is agreement that the other category will be enlarged soon thereafter.

Due to the considerable increase in the general membership, each regional group should be given a new non-permanent seat. In this regard, Lithuania would insist that the Group of Eastern European States, which doubled in size over the last decade, be given at least one additional non-permanent seat.

New permanent seats should be allocated for industrialized and developing countries which have proved to be key players in their regions and whose input for the maintenance of security and stability is indispensable. The permanent status, however, must be conditional on non-use or limited use of the veto, increased financial contributions, and other additional responsibilities.

Being undemocratic in principle and constituting the main obstacle to reform of the Council, the veto right should be curtailed and eventually abolished. This right should be applicable only to matters under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and not to Charter amendments.

Although substantial progress has been made in this area, further and constant democratization and increase in the transparency of the Security Council's methods of work is essential. The successful implementation of the Brahimi report by the Council would also make a significant contribution to the openness of the Council's working methods.

A reformed and enlarged Security Council will not only be more fairly representative, but, as importantly, more effective. Properly balanced membership will lend greater legitimacy to its decisions and, hence, their enjoyment of greater authority and respect worldwide. We should seize the opportunity to find a core solution — a right balance between efficiency and representativity. They are equally important and should not be mutually exclusive.

Debates in the Open-ended Working Group have exposed an obvious crystallization of views among the overwhelming majority on most of those issues. Narrowing the differences and converging positions is

possible only through compromise and flexibility on the part of all. Where stakes are high, an ideal solution may not seem likely to descend upon us. Rather, painstaking compromises and a determination not to waste momentum may yield the results we are really after.

Programme of work

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Acting President: I should like to inform Members that the General Assembly will take up agenda item 42, "Special session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children" on Monday, 20 November, in the morning as the last item, to consider a revised draft resolution, which will be issued on Monday morning as document A/55/L.34/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.